

disease. Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related death in the United States, yet it is one of the most highly preventable forms of cancer. Early diagnosis is critical to survival. Research shows that 91 percent of patients with localized colorectal cancer survive for 5 years after diagnosis, yet only 37 percent of all diagnoses occur at this stage. The remaining 63 percent of cases are not discovered until the disease has spread throughout the body.

Because 75 percent of new cases occur in persons with no known risk factors, regular colorectal cancer screenings are crucial to prevention. Even for an individual without symptoms, screenings are extremely important. For those over 50 and for individuals with a family history of cancer, screenings should be scheduled on a regular basis. I am pleased to note that Medicare coverage for colonoscopies was expanded in 2001 to provide this screening to more beneficiaries, and many commercial health plans now cover this cost.

Many people avoid colorectal cancer screening due to fear or anxiety, however, it is important for all Americans to understand the importance of this routine procedure. During National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, I encourage all Americans to learn more about this disease, to assist prevention efforts, and to recognize the importance of colorectal screenings.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 2002 as National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. I call upon all Americans to take appropriate measures to protect themselves and their loved ones from this disease.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this Second day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-sixth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 5, 2002]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 4, and it

was published in the *Federal Register* on March 6.

Proclamation 7528—Save Your Vision Week, 2002

March 2, 2002

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

Healthy vision is a precious gift that allows us to enjoy the beauty of nature, the smile of a loved one, and the many wonders in the world around us. Unfortunately for 14 million Americans, eye problems can interfere with daily activities and inhibit the enjoyment of life.

Health officials have identified the most significant and preventable threats to vision. According to the Department of Health and Human Service's *Healthy People 2010* report, visual impairment represents one of our country's 10 most frequent causes of disability.

To help avoid or remedy vision problems, we must remain dedicated to the prevention of eye injuries, emphasize early detection of eye disease, work to research and develop new treatments and rehabilitation therapies, and promote vision health awareness. All Americans should take steps to ensure that eye health becomes a priority in our homes, businesses, and communities. We should commit to receiving regular dilated eye examinations; we should wear protective eyewear when necessary, both recreationally and on the job; and we must make every effort to ensure children age 5 and under receive vision screening.

The Congress, by joint resolution approved December 30, 1963, as amended (77 Stat. 629; 36 U.S.C. 138), has authorized and requested the President to proclaim the first week in March of each year as "Save Your Vision Week." During this year's observance, let us renew our commitment to fighting the causes of visual impairment and to supporting good eye health. I encourage all Americans to learn more about ways to prevent eye problems and to help others maintain the invaluable asset of eyesight.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 3 through March 9, 2002, as Save Your Vision Week. I urge all Americans to make eye care and eye safety an important part of their lives and to include dilated eye examinations in their regular health maintenance programs. I invite eye care professionals, the media, and all public and private organizations dedicated to preserving eyesight to join in activities that will raise awareness of measures we can take to protect and sustain our vision.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this second day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-sixth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 5, 2002]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 4, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on March 6.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Educators and an Exchange With Reporters in Eden Prairie, Minnesota

March 4, 2002

The President. We had a really good discussion about education, the importance of public education in America. The better our public schools are, the better the quality of life for all our citizens. I also had a chance to listen to Minnesota teachers, people who have dedicated their lives to making our communities better by teaching children how to read and write and add and subtract, but also teaching children how to behave and how to learn through example. I cannot thank the teachers enough.

I hope that, through my words and deeds, I'm able to convince people to become a teacher, because it's such a noble profession, and it's such an important profession for America and our future. I absolutely believe there are—that this country can achieve anything we want. That includes making sure

every child can read and every child has got a hopeful future because he or she has gotten a great public school education.

So I want to thank you all very much. I'm really looking forward to speaking to your school. Thanks for the hospitality, and thank you all very much for serving our country by being a—by being such good teachers.

Let me answer a few questions, then, of course—

Operation Anaconda

Q. Mr. President, will you need to increase the U.S. troop presence in Afghanistan or delay an expansion of the war on terrorism beyond Afghanistan as a result of the Al Qaida resurgence—

The President. Well, first of all, we've always known Al Qaida exists in Afghanistan. And from the beginning of this, I have cautioned the American people that this is going to take a while, that it's going to take a while to rout out Al Qaida wherever it tries to hide. The American people understand that.

And as you well know, over the weekend we've started an operation against a significant nest of Al Qaida fighters. These are people that, if they were to escape, could conceivably harm the United States again. And therefore, we're going to hunt them down wherever they try to hide.

And I am so proud of the men and women who wear our uniform. I appreciate the efforts of our coalition to chase down Al Qaida, to bring them to justice. I'm obviously saddened by the loss of life. All America is saddened when one of our soldiers loses life.

On the other hand, I think most Americans and I hope these parents and loved ones understand, the cause is important, and the cause is just. I rely—obviously, rely upon the advice of our commanders on the ground as to what is necessary to win. But we'll take whatever means is necessary to protect our service men and women. And we'll win this battle, and we'll keep battling Al Qaida wherever we find them.

In terms of the overall scope, the international scope, I have always said that sometimes the American people will see us—see our military in action, and sometimes they won't. But we will keep the pressure on Al Qaida. Our country is still under threat, and